Access
News on WCB products, programs, and services
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Enhanced clearance site at WorkSafe™ online

Changes to the online clearance application now allow you multiple requests in one clearance letter. Clearances have been available at WorkSafe online since March 2000, but we've updated the site to allow you to obtain a clearance for one or up to 150 firms in a single letter.

Previously, a separate request for each clearance was required. You can still get a single clearance, but to help reduce the time it takes to get the clearance status on a group of firms, the application now allows you to submit a query on several firms at once. The result: you'll get one multi-subject clearance letter telling you which firms are up-to-date on their premiums and which firms are not.

This information is valuable because if the business you hire isn't registered or making payments to the WCB, you risk paying the firm's premiums in connection with the work or service being performed on your behalf.

For more information, visit the employers' section of WorkSafe online at **www.worksafebc.com** and click on "Obtain a Clearance Letter." The help screens will guide you through the process and explain how a clearance letter can help protect you and your assets.

ETS requirements to protect all workers in B.C.

On September 10, 2001, all workers in B.C. will be protected from second-hand tobacco smoke, including workers in the hospitality sector, long-term care facilities, and provincial correctional facilities.

The amendment to Section 4.81 of the Regulation will require all B.C. employers to control workers' exposure to environmental tobacco smoke through one of the following methods:

- Prohibiting smoking
- Restricting smoking to a designated smoking area, such as a safe outdoor location or a separately ventilated, structurally separate area that workers do not have to enter except in an emergency, or to investigate for illegal activity
- Other equally effective means

Any compliance options developed by employers in the hospitality industry must also comply with the *Liquor Control Act of B.C.* and other applicable municipal bylaws. For more information about the Act, contact the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General at 250 387-1254.

To help prepare for the September 10 deadline, WCB Prevention staff is working closely with hospitality employers to assist them in understanding the requirements. Contact your WCB safety officer for assistance or the WCB office nearest you, or call the Prevention Information Line at **604 276-3100**, toll-free in B.C. at **1 888 621-SAFE (7233)**.

Additional information on ETS requirements is available on WorkSafe online at **www.worksafebc.com**.

WCB targets young worker safety

This year's WCB Young Worker Program is targeted at reducing the injury rate among workers aged 15 to 24 who work in restaurants, supermarkets, and retail outlets.

To accomplish this goal, the WCB is developing partnerships with health and safety associations, employers, and workers in the above three classification units (CUs) where young worker claims are the highest.

The WCB is also creating a regional strategy to reduce injuries to young workers in the top five CUs in B.C., and to reduce injuries in targeted Young Worker Focus Firms.

2001 Young Worker Safety Kit

Employers have the responsibility to provide young workers with orientation, education, and training, but the WCB has resources that can help. Order the *2001 Young Worker Safety Kit*, which contains booklets, posters, reports, and other information designed to help employers, supervisors, and young workers prevent workplace injury. A young worker safety video is also available.

To order the kit and video, e-mail WCB Publications and Videos at **pubvid@wcb.bc.ca**, fax **604 279-7406**, or call **604 276-3068** (toll-free in B.C. **1 800 661-2112**, local **3068**).

Accurate information equals accurate premiums

When you report the right way, you pay the right premium.

When completing your Employer's Remittance Form **do** the following:

- Enter your total worker earnings on the payment slip at the bottom of your form if you only have one classification.
- Return the slip, even if you do not owe an assessment.
- Return the slip and the top portion of the form if you have more than one classification.
- Return the slip, even if your total worker earnings are zero (single classification employers).
- Return the slip (using the blue envelope provided) to the WCB or to your bank.

Also, when completing your Employer's Remittance Form:

- **Do not** send in a duplicate form — each form is intended for specified accounts and specified quarters.
- **Do not** leave boxes blank — if you mean zero, enter a zero (0) or "nil" in the box.
- **Do not** alter the preprinted information on the form — if you have a question, instead of writing it on the form, contact the Employer Service Centre at **604 244-6181**, toll-free at **1 888 922-2768**.

Follow these guidelines to ensure your remittance is accurately processed. And remember, if you don't meet your reporting and remitting requirements by the due date, you may be liable for a penalty.

Penalties now applied to firms that under-report

Since the fall of 2000, if you under-report your firm's assessable earnings and this under-remit, you could be charged an eight percent penalty on the additional assessment you should have paid. To avoid unnecessary penalties, be sure to include all your assessable earnings in the calculation of your assessment.

The WCB relies on premiums from employers to cover the cost of B.C.'s workplace injuries. When employers don't pay their premiums or under-report their assessable earnings, it means there are not enough funds to cover the cost of claims, and assessment rates can increase as a result.

For more information about what to include in your calculation, refer to your Employer's Remittance Form or contact the WCB Employer Service Centre at **604 244-6181**, toll-free at **1 888 922-2768**.

Who pays assessments for out-of-province workers?

Whether you're hiring workers or contractors from outside of B.C. or Canada, or procuring a contract outside of B.C., it's important to understand your WCB obligations. Failing to register or pay assessments could result in penalties against you. You could also be held liable for claim costs arising from injuries.

If you hire out-of-province workers (from Alberta, for example) to work in B.C., you must include their salaries in your assessable earnings because you are responsible for paying premiums to cover these workers.

If you send workers out of the province (or out of the country), those workers are typically covered for up to six months of compensation, provided they meet certain criteria as outlined in Section 8 of the Workers Compensation Act. (Visit WorkSafe online at **www.worksafebc.com** to view a copy of the Act.) In all situations, it is good practice to check the compensation regulations in the jurisdiction where the work will take place.

An out-of-province firm coming to B.C. and hiring B.C. workers must register with the WCB of B.C. and pay the appropriate assessments.

Registration is also required if the firm intends to work a total of 15 or more days a year in B.C. using only out-of-province workers. The firm may also be required to register if a total of 10 or more days are worked in B.C. during three or more visits a year.

If you have questions about coverage, call the WCB Employer Service Centre at **604 244-6181**, toll-free at **1 888 922-2768**.

Regulation Matters

Section 13.18 — Scaffolding

Issue

Section 13.18 requires:

- Clear markings on each major component of scaffolding to identify the manufacturer.
- A copy of the manufacturer's technical data in the workplace.

Background

Report by representatives of employers, workers, the scaffolding industry, and the WCB finds section 13.18 unworkable because:

- Manufacturers do not mark their scaffolding.
- Many manufacturers are located outside B.C. and are not legally bound to comply with the Regulation.

The working group recommended rewording section 13.18, but this could take up to 18 months to complete.

Directive

1. Safety officers will inspect scaffolding daily to ensure it is safe to use and has been properly erected by or under supervision of qualified workers.
2. Where there are violations of any of scaffolding sections, officers will issue orders except for section 13.18, subsections (1), (2), or (3).
3. Restriction to violations of section 13.18 also applies to reviews of orders, administrative penalties, or other processes arising out of inspections or accident investigations.
4. Directive expires December 31, 2002.

Contact Nick Attewell at **604 244-6376** or **nattewell@wcb.bc.ca**, for more information on section 13.18. Similar directives have been issued on sections 16.18(3) and 19.42.

Access

JUNE 2001

Access is published quarterly by the Communications Services Department of the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.

This newsletter is also available electronically on the WCB web site, WorkSafe online, at **www.worksafebc.com/pubs/newsletters/access/**. Look for the next issue in September 2001.

WorkSafe

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

Communications Services
Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.
PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal
Vancouver BC V6B 5L5